

bypass means, wherein said catalytic apparatus carries said catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, during the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means makes the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter.

4. (Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine, comprising:

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a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x to purify NO_x by reduction when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which carries said catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x; and

bypass means, wherein said catalytic apparatus carries said catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, immediately after the finishing of the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means does not make the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter and thus the exhaust gas passes through said particulate filter.

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 3 and 4 are amended into independent form to place them in condition for allowance.

Applicants thank Examiner Nguyen for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Paul Tsou, during the December 10 personal interview. The substance of the personal interview is incorporated in the remarks below.

Entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for all the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issues requiring further search or consideration; and (c) place the